DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 608 CS 508 504

AUTHOR Preiss, Raymond W.
TITLE Language Intensity: A Comprehensive, Annotated Bibliography.
INSTITUTION Speech Communication Association, Annandale, Va.
PUB DATE Jul 86
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Annotated Bibliographies; *Communication Research; Higher Education; *Interpersonal Communication; *Language Usage; Research Methodology; Semantics
IDENTIFIERS *Communication Behavior; Communication Strategies; Inoculation Theory; *Language Intensity; Message Transmission

ABSTRACT

Noting that message variables offer communication scholars a conceptually rich body of information, this 30-item annotated bibliography reflects the diversity of research conducted in the area of language intensity. The journal articles, conference papers, and chapters of books in the annotated bibliography are divided into sections on general message intensity and persuasion, perceptions of sources using intense language, language intensity and inoculation theory, counterattitudinal advocacy and intensity, language intensity and cognitive stress, language intensity and interpersonal influence, axiomatic theories of intensity, and semantics and language intensity. Materials listed were published between 1955 and 1985. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

LANGUAGE INTENSITY

A Comprehensive, Annotated Bibliography

Raymond W. Preiss
The University of Puget Sound
July, 1986

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Gerding
C. Cooke
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Message variables offer Communication scholars a conceptually rich body of information with application to every Speech Communication context. This bibliography reflects the diversity of research conducted in the area of language intensity. While comprehensive, this work excludes topics marginally related to the intensity construct: Opinionated language, obscenities, threats, metaphors, fear appeals, and obscure terms. Also, the section on semantics is limited to articles cited in intensity studies for message construction purposes.

Part I: General Message Intensity and Persuasion.

ED 405 608

Bowers, J.W. (1963). Language intensity, social introversion and attitude change. Speech Monographs, 30, 345-352. This study defined intensity as language indicating source deviation from attitudinal neutrality, and linked intensity to message discrepancy. Unexpectedly, low intensity messages were found to be more persuasive than high intensity messages. Extroverts exhibited more attitude change than did introverts.

Bowers, J.W. (1964). Some correlates of language intensity. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 50, 415-420. A benchmark study linking language intensity to perceptions of the direction and strength of a communicator's attitude toward a concept. Intensity was correlated to metaphors, polysyllables, modifiers, and obscure words.

Franzwa, H.H. (1969). Psychological factors influencing use of "evaluative-dynamic" language. Speech Monographs, 36, 103-109. An underreported study indicating that subjects use "dynamic" (intense) language when speaking to a partisan audience and "non-dynamic" language when addressing a hostile audience. Persuasion produced under these conditions was not explored.

Smith, M.J. (1977). The effects of threats to attitudinal freedom as a function of message quality and initial receiver attitude. Communication Monographs, 44, 196-206. 'Certainty terms' were used to urge agreement with an experimental message. Results supported reactance theory predictions.
ERIC EJ 167 547

Part II: Perceptions of Sources using Intense Language.

CS508504

Greenberg, B.S. (1976). The effects of language intensity modification on perceived verbal aggressiveness. Communication Monographs, 43, 130-139. The study found evidence that language qualifiers were better able to subtract from perceptions of source aggressiveness than to add to them. ERIC EJ 146 286

McEwen, W.J. and Greenberg, B.S. (1969). Effects of communication assertion intensity. Journal of Communication, 19, 257-265. Congruity theory predictions were found to be most accurate when source and concept intensity were matched with message intensity levels.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

McEwen, W.J. and Greenberg, B.S. (1970). The effects of message intensity on receiver evaluations of source, message, and topic. Journal of Communication, 20, 340-350. This often cited study offered support for the hypothesis that experimentally manipulated language intensity affected receiver perceptions of message clarity and source dynamism.

Mehrabian, A. (1967). Attitudes inferred from neutral verbal communication. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 31, 414-417. "Verbal immediacy" was conceptualized as degrees of the intensity and directness of interaction between source and receiver. Testing neutral messages, immediate communications were judged to indicate more positive communicator attitude.

III: Language Intensity and Inoculation Theory.

Burgoon, M., Burgoon, J.K., Riess, M., Butler, J., Montgomery, C.L., Stinnett, W.D., Miller, M., Long, M., Vaughn, D., and Caine, B. (1976). Propensity of persuasive attack and intensity of pretreatment as predictors of resistance to persuasion. Journal of Psychology, 92, 123-129. Uncertainty of subsequent attack and language intensity were reasoned to induce resistance to persuasion. The intensity of hypothesis was not supported.

Burgoon, M. and Chase, L.J. (1973). The effects of differential linguistic patterns attempting to induce resistance to persuasion. Speech Monographs, 40, 1-7. This study demonstrated support for key Inoculation Theory predictions and the mediational role of language intensity on audience expectations.

Burgoon, M. and King, L. (1974). The mediation of resistance to persuasion strategies by language intensity and active-passive participation. Human Communication Research, 1, 30-41. This comprehensive test of inoculation theory indicated that attack messages of high language intensity could overcome pretreatment inoculations.

Chase, L.J. and Kelly, C.W. (1976). Language intensity and resistance to persuasion: A research note. Human Communication Research, 3, 82-85. The authors found that inoculation predictions were facilitated by low language intensity. This conclusion was inconsistent with previous findings and was attributed to audience expectations. ERIC EJ 150 070

Miller, M.D. and Burgoon, M. (1979). The relationship between violations of expectations and the induction of resistance to persuasion. Human Communication Research, 5, 301-313. Receiver expectations and the intensity of the appeal were found to mediate resistance to persuasion. ERIC EJ 217 449

Part IV: Counterattitudinal Advocacy and Intensity

Bodaken, E.M., Plax, T.G., Pinland, R.N. and Weiner, A.N. (1976). Counterattitudinal communication as role enactment: Toward a socially-relevant explanation of self-persuasion. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Western Speech Communication Association,

Burgoon, M. and Miller, G.R. (1971). Prior attitude and language intensity as predictors of message style and attitude change following counterattitudinal advocacy. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 20, 246253. Subjects encoding belief-discrepant messages used language of lower intensity than those who encoded belief-congruent messages. Attitude change was positively related to the intensity of the message encoded.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Part V: Language Intensity and Cognitive Stress.

Carmichael, C.W. and Cronkhite, G.L. (1965). Frustration and language intensity. Speech Monographs, 32, 107-111. This study links the intensity research to the fear appeal and aggression literature. Highly aroused subjects tended to reject stimuli that further increased activation.

Daly, J.A. and Miller, M.D. (1975). Apprehension of writing as a predictor of message intensity. The Journal of Psychology, 89, 175-177. Subjects who scored high on a test of writing apprehension encoded less intense messages than subjects who scored low on the test.

Osgood, C.E. and Walker, E.G. (1959). Motivation and language behavior: A content analysis of suicide notes. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 59, 59-67. Suicide notes were found to exhibit ambivalence (low intensity) when compared to personal letters.

Part VI: Language Intensity and Interpersonal Influence.

Bradac, J.J., Hosman, L.A. and Tardy, C.H. (1978). Reciprocal disclosures and language intensity: Attributional consequences. Communication Monographs, 45, 1-17. Language intensity mediated third-party judgments of intimacy when intimacy level was reciprocated. Also, the intensity of a reciprocated self-disclosure was found to affect perceptions of source internality.

Bradac J.J., Schneider, M.J., Hemphill, M.R. and Tardy, C.H. (1980). Consequences of language intensity and compliance gaining strategies in an initial heterosexual encounter. In H. Giles, W.P. Robinson, & P. Smith (Eds.), Language: Social Psychological Perspectives. Oxford: Pergamon Press. Language intensity mediated source perceptions in heterosexual encounters. An integrating strategy facilitated compliance, and females tended to respond favorably to male violations of gender role expectations.

Koper, R.J., Donohue, W.A., and Stahle, R. (1985). Language intensity in divorce mediation. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, Denver. Analysis of divorce mediation transcripts indicated that high intensity language was used in unsuccessful mediation attempts. Also, patterns of intensity differed among the participants.

Preiss R.W. and Corison, C. (1985). Language intensity as style of self-disclosure: Shared linguistic patterns as an index of the reciprocity norm. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, Denver. The intensity and risk of self-disclosure affected message recall. Results conformed to Speech Accommodation Theory predictions.

Part VI: Axiomatic Theories of Intensity.

Burgoon, M., Jones, S.B., and Stewart, D. (1975). Toward a message-centered theory of persuasion: Three empirical investigations of language intensity. Human Communication Research, 1, 240-256. A compelling case was made for the study of message variables (intensity) as an inherent aspect of communication theory construction. Source gender, test anxiety and credibility interacted with intensity. ERIC EJ 127 543

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bradac, J.J., Bowers, J.W., and Courtright, J.A. (1979). Three variables in communication research: Intensity, immediacy, and diversity. Human Communication Research, 5, 257-269. An excellent synthesis of literature which produced 9 generalizations bearing on the intensity construct. ERIC EJ 215 828

Bradac, J.J., Bowers, J.W., and Courtright, J.A. (1980). Lexical variations in intensity, immediacy, and diversity: An axiomatic theory and causal model. In R.N. St.Clair & H. Giles (Eds.), The Social and Psychological Contexts of Language. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. An extension of their 1979 article, the authors propose axioms, theorems, and a causal model of message effects.

Bradac, J.J., Courtright, J.A., and Bowers, J.W. (1979). Effects of intensity, immediacy and diversity upon receiver attitudes toward a belief-discrepant message and its source. In H. Giles, W.P. Robinson, and P.M. Smith (Eds.), Language: Social psychological perspectives. Oxford: Pergamon Press. The authors tested several of the hypotheses generated in their axiomatic theory of language variables. Generally, results did not conform to the intensity predictions. However, when intensity was high, low verbal immediacy produced higher source likeability ratings.

Part VII: Semantics and Language Intensity.

Jones, L.V. and Thurstone, L.L., (1955). The psychophysics of semantics: An experimental investigation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 39, 31-39. Successive-interval scaling was used to rate the intensity of 51 descriptive adjectives. These "known" values were used in later studies to build experimental messages.

Steinfatt, T.M. and Tadayon, M. (1976). The psychophysics of semantics: Successive interval scaling of seventy-four English words and phrases with reference to consumer foods. Paper presented at the annual convention of the International Communication Association, Portland. This study replicated the Jones & Thrustone (1955) scaling of intense words. Substantial change in perceived intensity was observed.

Part VIII: Critiques of the Intensity Literature.

Ellis, D.G. (1982). Language and speech communication. In M. Burgoon (Ed.), Communication Yearbook 6. New Brunswick: Transaction Books. This essay addressed the potential for theory development using message variables and discussed the issue of polysemy. Polysemy deals with the diversity of meanings that may be generated by experimental manipulations of language variables.

Jackson, S. and Jacobs, S. (1983). Generalizing about messages: Suggestions for design and analysis of experiments. Human Communication Research, 9, 169-191. The authors warn against using research designs that treat single instances of a message category as fixed effects. This results in random effects being viewed as systematic variance, thus threatening the validity of findings. More optimistic essays by Bradac and Hewes follow the article.

* * * * *

This bibliography is distributed by the Speech Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Rd. Bldg. E, Annandale, VA 22003. It may be reproduced for free distribution without permission of the Speech Communication Association.

Entries followed by ERIC EJ numbers are journal articles indexed in Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE), an ERIC publication. Copies of journal articles may be obtained from your library, from the publisher, and in most cases from University Microfilms International.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE